ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE – Handout 1

Briefly describe a challenge you are currently facing where there is a gp between your aspiration and the current reality. A current challenge is ideal, but one from the past can be used as long as unresolved issues remain. This will be most applicable if you describe something from your work with a current collaboration but it could be from your personal, civic or community life as well. This exercise will be most useful to you if you choose the challenge that is most pressing to you, something getting in the way of you realizing your purpose.

Tell us what's been done to address this challenge to date What actions have you already taken to address this challenge?

What are the perspectives of other stakeholders involved in this issue?

What could they potentially gain or lose if progress is made?

Why is this challenge important to you?

What benefits would it bring to you and/or your organization or community if progress was made?

The way that people see the problem is often the biggest part of the problem.

It's important to remember that the technical work is also critical, but we know how to fix it or can delegate to someone who can.

First, let's begin by separating out the technical elements of your challenge.

Second, let's continue to refine your adaptive challenge by to looking at the problem from different lenses.   In developing the three different versions, the goal is create a richer understanding of the adaptive challenge that begins to incorporate multiple stakeholders' perspectives.

List 3 Technical Aspects of Your Challenge

Take 20 minutes to work on 3 different versions of your challenge

Version 1: Describe the challenge as you normally talk about it with a colleague/friend/community member.

Version 2: Describe the challenge as it looks from the perspective of another person involved. Someone that bothers you the most would be best.

Version 3: Describe the challenge in a way that shows how you yourself may be contributing to the problem. If you're like most people, you may not show up in versions 1 or 2.

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Each person should share the three versions of their challenge with their group.

After sharing each version, group members should help the group member refine their thinking.

Version 1: Describe the challenge as you normally talk about it with a colleague/friend/community member.
• What is your theory on why you haven't already resolved this problem?

• You've identified a gap between your current reality and your aspired state. Why does that gap exist?

• Let's say you snap your fingers and the problem is suddenly solved, what other problems might emerge that you hadn't seen coming?

Version 2: Describe the challenge as it looks from the perspective of another person involved. If you have a hard time thinking of someone, choose the person who is most resistant to your idea of progress.

• Who is giving you the most trouble with regard to your challenge? How might they view the problem?

• Where do you notice the resistance happening?

• Who are the relevant parties to the challenge, and what are their perspectives on it?

Version 3: Describe the challenge in a way that shows how you yourself may be contributing to the problem. If you're like most people, you may not show up in versions 1 or 2.

• How might you be contributing to the problem?

• If a security camera were watching you, what would it see you doing?

• What's a less noble explanation of what you're doing? How would the person that bothers you most describe what you're doing?

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